

# Selling Space:

## The Significance of Propaganda During the Space Race

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Website Word Count: 1,180

Media Time: 2:55

Process Paper Word Count: 495

# PROCESS PAPER

I chose Space Race propaganda as my topic by brainstorming interesting communication events. I have always been curious about space, and when I learned about propaganda in school, I decided to combine the two. Although the Space Race is well known, most people do not think of it in terms of propaganda. My website provides a different perspective.

My topic relates to the theme because propaganda is a form of communication. Propaganda is defined as communicating information to help or injure a cause. My website examines propaganda's different meanings and forms in the Space Race. The posters, speeches, media, and classroom instruction used by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were the key to understanding the objectives and importance of the Space Race.

Because the pandemic limited ways I could gather information, I did most of my research online. Primary sources I used included declassified government documents, political speeches, and Soviet propaganda posters. I also used secondary sources such as Space Race articles and translated Soviet documents. One of my favorite sources was *American Moonshot* by Douglas Brinkley, which gave me background information and filled in pieces of my research. I also interviewed Mary Martha Rice Barnett who was a student and teacher during the Space Race and recalled viewing propaganda.

I created my project by gathering all my sources and information into one document. Then, I turned my thoughts into paragraphs and made a draft of my website. After that, I added more images, quotes, and videos to my site. I then formulated my sources into a complete bibliography and wrote my process paper. As I progressed through competition levels, I expanded my research and improved my website. I spent a lot of time interpreting Soviet media, analyzing the short and long term effects of my topic, visually showcasing my topic's historical significance, and presenting each nation's views on Space Race propaganda.

My historical argument is that propaganda and communication shaped the speed and outcome of the Space Race. After Sputnik launched into space, both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. used different communication strategies to shape public opinion. These forms of propaganda were the key to understanding each nation's agenda, goals, and technological advancements during the Space Race.

My topic is historically significant because Space Race propaganda had multiple impacts. In the short term, propaganda helped the U.S. win the Space Race by

justifying national expenses, changing educational priorities, focusing on speed, and enhancing national security. In the long term, Space Race propaganda had the positive effects of accelerating technological development, proving that capitalism was technologically superior to communism, enabling a series of NASA programs, and emphasizing math and science education. However, the effects were not all positive. Negative effects included continuing development of nuclear weapons, cementing competition between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., decreasing support for space after propaganda stopped, and reducing the focus on historical and literary education.